



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 6, 2016

Indiana launches state nutrient reduction strategy

INDIANAPOLIS – The [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) (ISDA) today announced the release of a statewide strategy designed to improve water quality in Indiana, the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The [State Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) (SNRS) is the product of an inclusive effort of the [Indiana Conservation Partnership](#) (ICP) under the leadership of ISDA and the [Indiana Department of Environmental Management](#) (IDEM).

This effort captures statewide, present and future endeavors in Indiana which positively impact the state's waters as well as gauge the progress of conservation, water quality improvement and soil health practice adoption in Indiana.

"This completed strategy is the culmination of a great deal of hard work," said Ted McKinney, Director of ISDA. "Importantly, the work was always collaborative and includes input from local, state and federal agencies, plus the private sector and non-government organizations. I'm thrilled with its completion."

In the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPAs) 2008 Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Action Plan, each of the 12 major states in the Mississippi River Drainage Basin, which includes Indiana, were called to develop plans to reduce the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen carried to the Gulf of Mexico. When excess nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus enter a body of water, it stimulates excessive plant growth, known as an algal bloom, which can lead to low oxygen levels in the water once the algae decompose.

These areas of very low oxygen cannot support aquatic life and are often called "dead zones," also referred to as hypoxia. Excess nutrients draining to the Gulf has led to a "dead zone" that stretches for thousands of square miles. Indiana's SNRS also addresses the Western Lake Erie Basin and the Lake Michigan Basin into which some of Indiana's watersheds drain.

"This is a great step forward," said IDEM Commissioner Carol Comer. "Hoosiers can be proud of the work Indiana is doing to help keep the waters of our nation clean for generations of Americans to come."

The development of Indiana's SNRS has evolved over the last several years through several iterations and updates.

"I am happy to say that we now have a finalized version of the Indiana State Nutrient Reduction Strategy approved by EPA that we will continue to build upon, improve, and strengthen with action items," said Julie Harrold, ISDA Program Manager for Water Quality Initiatives.

Partners involved in the development of the SNRS include staff within the ICP, as well as representatives from agricultural commodity groups, Indiana Farm Bureau and Purdue University.

“My hope is to continue to use the expertise and experience of these partners in future updates of the strategy,” Harrold said.

The Indiana SNRS represents Indiana’s commitment to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff into state waters from point sources and non-point sources alike. The objectives of this strategy include:

- Acknowledgment of the challenges facing the improvement of Indiana’s impaired waters;
- Involvement and engaging of stakeholders in the state’s efforts to reduce nutrient loads;
- Prioritization of HUC 8 watersheds and first-round HUC 12 watersheds;
- Discussion of water quality monitoring and regulatory control of point sources;
- The inventory and utilization of resources to achieve their highest impact on nutrient reduction;
- Encouragement of voluntary incentive based conservation through the many state and federal water quality related programs; and
- To illustrate the means by which the state will provide reports and accountability of assisted conservation practices reported by staff in the Indiana Conservation Partnership.

The strategy also serves as a renewed effort to encourage outreach and education to conservation partnerships and the public regarding stewardship of Indiana’s waters. This strategy acknowledges that while the potential to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus entering our waters is great, the achievement of these objectives is dependent upon the cooperation of state, federal and local organizations and initiatives.

Another goal is to help raise awareness about the location and nature of conservation practices on productive agricultural ground and other rural best management practices (BMPs) such as filter strips, buffers, cover crops and managed drainage. Septic system management, appropriate residential fertilizer applications, erosion control at construction sites and urban BMPs, such as green infrastructure, will be a key to controlling nutrient runoff.

There will always be a need for continued efforts in conservation, education, outreach and research in order to maintain progress, the report claims. The development of Indiana’s SNRS will benefit our state’s local water resources, which in turn will benefit the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes into which Indiana’s waterways drain.

To view the Indiana SNRS, visit www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm, and comments can be sent to ISDANutrientReduction@isda.in.gov. The strategy will be updated every two years.

###

Media Contact:

Ben Gavelek

Phone: 317.690.3303

Email: bgavelek@isda.in.gov



Indiana State Department of Agriculture • www.isda.in.gov • (317) 232-8770